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Economic and Social Council

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Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up
23–26 April 2018
Agenda item 4
Adoption of the report

Draft report

A. Opening and duration of the session

1. The 2018 meeting of the Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up was held at Headquarters from 23 to 26 April 2018 pursuant to paragraphs 130 to 132 of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.

2. At the 1st meeting, held on 23 April 2018, the President of the Economic and Social Council, Marie Chatardová (Czechia), opened the forum and made a statement.

3. At the same meeting, the President of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, Miroslav Lajčák (Slovakia), addressed the forum.

4. Also at the same meeting, the forum viewed a video message by the Secretary-General.

5. Also at the 1st meeting, the Deputy Secretary-General made a statement.

6. Also at the 1st meeting, the forum heard a keynote address by the High Representative for the Peace Fund of the African Union, Donald Kaberuka.

7. At the same meeting, the forum heard a special address by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Qatar, Sultan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi, on the Doha messages of the High-level Conference on Financing for Development and the Means of Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

8. Also at the same meeting, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs introduced the main findings of the 2018 report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development as contained in the note by the Secretary-General on financing for development: progress and prospects (E/FFDF/2018/2).

9. Also at the 1st meeting, the forum heard presentations on global trends and prospects for financing sustainable development by the following: Director-General of the World Trade Organization, Roberto Azevêdo (video message); Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, Achim Steiner; Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Mukhisa Kituyi; Deputy

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Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Tao Zhang; Senior Vice-President for the 2030 Development Agenda, United Nations Relations and Partnerships of the World Bank Group, Mahmoud Mohieldin; and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Shamshad Akhtar (on behalf of the regional commissions of the United Nations).

[*To be completed*]

B. Agenda

10. At the 1st meeting, the forum adopted its provisional agenda as contained in document E/FFDF/2018/1. The agenda read as follows:

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
2. Follow-up and review of the financing for development outcomes and the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:
   (a) Special high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development;
   (b) General debate;
   (c) Ministerial round tables;
   (d) Thematic round tables, expert discussions and interactive dialogues.
3. Adoption of the intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations.
4. Adoption of the report.

C. Attendance

11. The forum was attended by the representatives of ___ States Members of the United Nations and States members of specialized agencies and the European Union. Representatives of intergovernmental organizations and other entities, and representatives of the United Nations system, as well as representatives of civil society organizations and business sector entities, also attended. The list of participants will be issued as document E/FFDF/2018/INF/2.

D. Documentation

12. The list of documents before the forum is contained in the annex to the present report.

Annex

List of documents

Document symbol	*Agenda item*	*Title*
E/FFDF/2018/1	1	Provisional agenda and annotations
E/FFDF/2018/2	2	Note by the Secretary-General on financing for development: progress and prospects
E/FFDF/2018/L.2	2	Follow-up and review of the financing for development outcomes and the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
E/FFDF/2018/INF/1		Information note prepared by the President of the Economic and Social Council on arrangements for the 2018 Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up
E/FFDF/2018/INF/2		List of participants

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in Doha on 18 and 19 November 2017.

4. We note the upturn in some areas of the world economy, which has underpinned progress in the policy agenda across all the action areas of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, while recognizing that the recovery has not been shared evenly across and between countries and regions. We are concerned that the world economy remains vulnerable to financial and economic volatility and emphasize the need to address medium-term risks, including the potential effects of rising global interest rates leading to a reversal of capital flows to the disadvantage of developing countries and increased debt distress. We further note that long-term, quality and responsible sustainable investment, especially in countries most in need, remains insufficient to meet our internationally agreed Sustainable Development Goals. We will seek to use the momentum of the world economy to address implementation gaps that restrain progress towards achieving the Goals. We devote ourselves collectively to the pursuit of global sustainable development and of mutually beneficial cooperation, which can bring meaningful gains to all countries and all parts of the world. We reaffirm our strong political commitment to end poverty and hunger everywhere; to combat inequalities within and among countries; to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies; to protect human rights and promote gender equality and empowerment of women and girls; and to ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity, and ensuring no country or person is left behind.

5. We commit to take, among others, three key actions in support of the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in the current global context: (a) to facilitate the use of all sources of financing, including innovative finance, at all levels, while being mindful of fiscal and debt sustainability, recognizing that they have different objectives and characteristics, which make them suitable in different contexts and sectors; (b) to work to align incentives of both public and private actors with long-term sustainable development; and (c) to operationalize national financial frameworks into investable projects and pipelines. We will take into account that every State has and shall freely exercise full permanent sovereignty over all its wealth, natural resources and economic activity.

Cross-cutting issues

6. We reaffirm our commitment to promoting gender equality, the empowerment of all women and girls and the full realization of their human rights throughout policymaking and programming, including in fiscal policies, finance, development cooperation, labour markets and other areas, with due recognition of care work where unequal gender roles continue to hold women back in the economy. We underline that globally, gross domestic product (GDP) could increase significantly if every country achieved gender equality and increased participation of women in the formal labour force, as well as in leadership at all levels of decision-making. We recognize the importance of unlocking the potential of women and girls and the need for substantial and significantly increased investments to close resource gaps for achieving gender equality. We stress the importance of investing in quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure which is gender-responsive. We welcome efforts to design and implement gender-responsive budgets and recognize the contribution of such budgets to ensuring transparency and equal participation in revenue and expenditure decisions. We encourage institutions, both domestic and international, to better consider the impact of their policies and investments on gender equality. We also reaffirm the need to increase opportunities for women-owned businesses by building their capacities and skills.

7. We emphasize that all of our actions need to be underpinned by our strong commitment to protect and preserve our planet and natural resources, our biodiversity and our climate. We recognize the importance of avoiding harmful activities. Environmental degradation, climate change and other environmental risks threaten to undermine past successes and future prospects. We need to ensure that our efforts enhance resilience in the face of these threats. We recall the entry into force of the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. We call for mobilizing further action and support for climate change mitigation and adaptation, taking into account the specific needs and special circumstances of developing countries, especially those particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

8. We strongly stress the critical role of science, technology and innovation in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. We acknowledge the positive transformative potential of technology, both existing and emerging, as well as its challenges and risks, which should be addressed by appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks.

9. We recognize the importance of addressing the diverse needs and challenges faced by countries in special situations, in particular African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations, as well as the specific challenges faced by middle-income countries. We affirm the importance of social protection services and essential public services for all, consistent with national development strategies, and encourage support for capacity-building in this regard.

10. We stress that investing in quality, accessible, affordable, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including transport, energy, water and sanitation for all, is vital for achieving many of our goals. We acknowledge that closing the global infrastructure gap is a priority for the international community and that major challenges remain to scale up Sustainable Development Goal investments in infrastructure, especially in the project design and preparation phase, particularly in developing countries. In this regard, we note with concern that private participation in infrastructure has fallen each year since the Addis Ababa Action Agenda was adopted in 2015. We look forward to the third Global Infrastructure Forum, to be held in Bali, Indonesia, in October 2018, and call on its participants to support developing countries in building project pipelines. We will explore new instruments for mobilizing resources for long-term infrastructure investment, including developing infrastructure as an asset class, while recognizing that further work is required to better understand risks associated with creating liquid instruments derived from illiquid assets. We recognize the important roles of national, regional and multilateral development banks in channelling long-term development finance to infrastructure in developing countries, especially in African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. We stress the critical importance of industrial development for developing countries, as an important source of economic growth, economic diversification and value addition, as a means to achieve structural and economic transformation. We will support increased efforts, consistent with relevant international rules and obligations, to invest in inclusive and sustainable industrial development to effectively address major challenges, such as sustainable growth and job creation, resource and energy efficiency, pollution and climate change, knowledge-sharing, innovation and social inclusion. In this regard, we also welcome the relevant cooperation within the United Nations system, including the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and other ongoing initiatives.

Domestic public resources

11. We note progress in domestic resource mobilization, underscored by the principle of national ownership, but emphasize that large gaps in mobilization remain between many least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, middle-income countries and developed countries. We will strive to strengthen revenue collection and related accountability mechanisms, as well as public service delivery at the national and subnational levels, including through whole-of-government approaches and medium-term revenue strategies. We acknowledge that further work needs to be done on the digitalization of business and finance and its impact on tax revenue collection. We stress that international frameworks need to account for the impacts of digitalization and globalization, through a consensus-based process. We recognize the importance of fiscal management to enhance domestic resource mobilization and encourage that this be a priority for all types of development cooperation, including official development assistance (ODA) and technical support, such as through the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Tax Administration Diagnostic Assessment Tool. We intend to apply technology to tax administrations as a means for policy enforcement and combating tax evasion, while ensuring an adequate framework for protecting the privacy of citizens and the confidentiality of data. Efforts in international tax cooperation should be universal in approach and scope and fully take into account the needs and capacities of all countries, in particular least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and African countries. We welcome the work programme of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters. We continue to urge Member States to support the Committee and its subsidiary bodies through the voluntary trust fund, to enable the Committee to fulfil its mandate, including by supporting the increased participation of developing country experts at subcommittee meetings.

12. We note with deep concern the impact of illicit financial flows, in particular those caused by tax evasion, corruption and transnational organized crime, on the economic, social and political stability and development of societies, and especially on developing countries. We note that developing countries are the most susceptible to the negative impact of illicit financial flows and in that regard call upon Member States to ensure that illicit financial flows, when tracked, are dealt with in accordance with their national legal systems and relevant international legal obligations with the aim of returning confiscated assets to the requesting States. We also note with concern that only a small portion of stolen assets is returned to the countries of origin. We welcome the ongoing efforts of Member States to enhance knowledge and broaden understanding of the challenges and opportunities involved with international cooperation to combat illicit financial flows and we welcome progress made on developing good practices on asset return to foster sustainable development. We call upon Member States to continue such efforts, including through relevant multilateral and international organizations of the United Nations system and other relevant regional or international forums. We acknowledge the important role of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, as the most comprehensive and universal instrument to prevent and combat corruption, in helping improve the capacity of and cooperation between States parties, underlining that the return of assets pursuant to its chapter V, Asset recovery, is a fundamental principle of the Convention. We also acknowledge the role of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto, in promoting cooperation to prevent and combat transnational organized crime more effectively. We express our concern that cryptocurrencies are increasingly being used for illicit activities, and in this regard encourage Member States and other relevant organizations to consider taking measures to prevent and counter their illicit use. We will strengthen international

cooperation to combat illicit financial flows and strengthen good practices on asset return to foster sustainable development and encourage countries and relevant multilateral and international organizations to continue their efforts to provide, upon request, technical assistance and capacity-building assistance to developing countries in order to improve their capacity to prevent, detect and combat illicit financial flows, including to counter corruption, and strengthen good practices on asset return to foster sustainable development.

13. We note the progress made through international tax cooperation, including the implementation of internationally agreed standards on tax transparency, such as the work of the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes. We acknowledge that more work is needed to enable developing countries, especially the poorest countries, to benefit from these standards. We note the holding of the first global conference of the Platform for Collaboration on Tax in February 2018, on "Taxation and the Sustainable Development Goals" and take note of the Platform partners' statement, including their commitment to support country-led medium-term revenue strategies. We further encourage efforts by relevant national actors to mitigate transfer mispricing and trade misinvoicing by multinational corporations, with a view to strengthening the tax base in host countries, bearing in mind the need for developing countries to strengthen their domestic resource mobilization in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Domestic and international private business and finance

14. We note that the momentum around sustainable investment and finance, including impact investment, is growing, and we invite private companies to adopt sustainable practices that foster long-term value. We note that a reallocation of a small percentage of assets under management towards long-term quality investment in sustainable development could make a significant contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. We will explore ways to incentivize institutional investors to take a long-term approach, taking into account the public interest. Proper interpretation of fiduciary duty for long-term investors should include all material impacts on returns that drive long-term performance of investments. We will promote sustainable corporate practices, including the integration of environmental, social and governance factors into company reporting as appropriate, with countries deciding on the appropriate balance of voluntary and mandatory rules. We emphasize that the United Nations should continue to bring together relevant stakeholders to discuss and disseminate the benefits of Sustainable Development Goal investing. We invite the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development, as part of its 2019 report, to further analyse, based on existing studies, the relationship between environmental, social and governance investing and returns.

15. We recognize recent progress in financial inclusion, but note that gaps still remain for women, people in rural and remote areas, elderly people, youth, migrants, forcibly displaced persons and people with disabilities, as well as for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and businesses and enterprises in the social and solidarity economy operating in both formal and informal sectors. We also recognize the important role that can be played by development banks, cooperatives, development finance institutions and financial instruments (such as guarantees, equity and debt financing) in this area. We further recognize that financial inclusion can be strengthened by making use of innovative means of financial intermediation. New financial technology applications may also help lower the cost of remittances. Noting the positive contribution of remittances to meeting the needs of recipient households, we will work towards reducing the average transaction cost of migrant remittances by 2030 to less than 3 per cent of the amount transferred. We emphasize the need for effective and proportionate regulation to monitor any systemic or

consumer risks related to technology enabled financial services. We will continue to broaden the range of financing instruments accessible to micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises.

International development cooperation

16. We welcome the increase in ODA in real terms in 2016. The decline in ODA to least developed countries has been reversed, but we note a decline in the share of ODA to country programmable aid. We also note that ODA to small island developing States remains very concentrated in a few such States, despite the increasing frequency, volatility and intensity of weather-related hazards many of them are exposed to. We recognize that ODA remains a main source of external finance for many landlocked developing countries. We also acknowledge that ODA and other concessional finance are still important for a number of middle-income countries. We are encouraged by those few countries that have met or surpassed their commitment to 0.7 per cent of ODA/gross national income and the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/gross national income to least developed countries, and call on all ODA providers to fulfil their respective commitments. We welcome the progress made to develop and mobilize support for innovative mechanisms of additional financing and invite more countries to voluntarily join in implementing innovative mechanisms, instruments and modalities which do not unduly burden developing countries. We encourage countries to further explore, including through the Leading Group on Innovative Financing for Development, new sources and instruments of innovative financing for funding the Sustainable Development Goals at the global, regional, national and subnational levels. We recognize that it is also critical that disaster risk reduction measures, with due consideration to prevention, are incorporated into development assistance programmes and infrastructure financing, as appropriate, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. We request the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development, as part of its 2019 report, to further discuss climate and disaster resilience in development financing to ensure the sustainability of development results. We will continue to hold open, inclusive and transparent discussions on the modernization of ODA measurement and on the proposed measure of "total official support for sustainable development" and we affirm that any such measure will not dilute commitments already made. We request the Inter-agency Task Force, as part of its 2019 report, to break down the use of ODA in developing countries.

17. We welcome continued efforts to improve the quality, effectiveness and impact of development cooperation and other international efforts in public finance, including adherence to agreed development cooperation effectiveness principles. We look forward to the Development Cooperation Forum, to be held in New York on 21 and 22 May 2018, and its guidance on policy and capacity-building opportunities concerning the effective use of blended financing to support developing country priorities and efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. We note the upcoming third high-level meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.

18. We welcome the contributions of South-South cooperation to poverty eradication and sustainable development. We reaffirm that South-South cooperation is an important element of international cooperation for development as a complement to, not a substitute for, North-South cooperation. We also commit to strengthening triangular cooperation as a means of bringing relevant experience and expertise to bear in development cooperation. We look forward to the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, to be held in Buenos Aires from 20 to 22 March 2019.

19. We welcome the work of multilateral development banks in support of the 2030 Agenda and take note of ongoing efforts to strengthen their collaboration and

coherence. We note that access to concessional finance is reduced as countries' incomes grow, and that some countries may not be able to access sufficient affordable financing from other sources to meet their needs. We take note of a willingness to develop a wider analysis of new measures, building on existing experiences with eligibility exceptions, for concessional finance and multidimensional assessments to address limitations of an income-only assessment of development and graduation readiness. In this regard, we encourage relevant institutions to learn from each other's efforts to address the diverse circumstances of countries, to better manage transitions and graduation. We welcome efforts by the multilateral development banks to continue optimizing the use of their balance sheets in support of the 2030 Agenda. We acknowledge the increasing and pivotal function of national and regional development banks, alongside the multilateral development banks, in reinforcing the financial architecture for sustainable development and, in this context, recognize the role of the International Development Finance Club. We note the potential of blended finance, including its ability to crowd-in, leverage or catalyse additional financing, and stress that projects should be aligned with national priorities, have long-lasting development impact and be in the public interest, while recognizing that for different Sustainable Development Goal investment areas, different types of finance may represent the most effective financing modalities. We call for more analysis, in the financing for development follow-up process, on how to realize the potential of blended finance, including its impact on closing gender equality gaps, and on designing blended finance instruments to respond to the unique situation of countries, especially those with special needs.

20. We recall the need for transparent methodologies for reporting climate finance from all sources and welcome the ongoing work in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. We note with concern the challenges in accessing financial resources for climate action in developing countries, especially in relation to funding for adaptation, while noting the significant scaling-up of the operations of the Green Climate Fund. In this regard, we call on the Green Climate Fund to ensure that all developing countries have access to the financial instruments available, in line with the eligibility criteria of the Fund.

International trade as an engine for development

21. We note that in 2017 trade growth recovered, albeit at low rates. We note with concern that exports of the least developed countries as a share of the global total have declined in recent years. We reaffirm that trade can contribute to the promotion of sustainable development and the alleviation of poverty, as recognized in the 2030 Agenda. We underline the importance for all countries, and in particular least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, to benefit from trading opportunities that bilateral, regional, plurilateral and multilateral agreements generate. We welcome all ongoing market access initiatives for least developed countries. We will explore policies that encourage growth in cross-border electronic commerce, including for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises.

22. We call for enhancing trade finance. We encourage export credit agencies and multilateral development banks to explore further developing trade and supply chain finance programmes. We stress that Aid for Trade, implementation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Trade Facilitation, targeted trade-related capacity-building and continued preferential market access for the exports of least developed countries are essential to integrate developing countries, in particular least developed countries, into the international trading system. We take note of the ministerial decisions adopted at the eleventh Ministerial Conference of WTO, held in December 2017. We invite the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development

to continue to monitor developments with respect to trade financing gaps, particularly for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, as part of its 2019 report.

Debt and debt sustainability

23. We note with concern that emerging debt challenges in developing countries have intensified, adding to the challenges of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. We recognize that it is helpful to differentiate how borrowing resources are used, and that effective public investment in infrastructure and productive capacity in support of the Sustainable Development Goals, under appropriate public debt management, can have a positive impact on fiscal space and debt sustainability. We encourage further work in this regard, including how this could be incorporated into public debt analysis, notably through the use of tools for quality assessment, while ensuring that risks of debt distress are flagged consistently and in a timely manner. We emphasize that improving debt analysis and management capacities remains important, including through better and broader data collection and technical assistance. We call for greater transparency, on the side of both debtors and creditors. Building capacity, strengthening policy frameworks and enhancing information sharing could help avoid new episodes of debt distress.

24. We recognize the need to assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief, debt restructuring and sound debt management, as appropriate. The devastating impact of the 2017 Atlantic hurricane season underlined that innovative, resilient mechanisms, such as state-contingent debt instruments, can lessen financial stresses in times of crisis. We intend to explore the potential of innovative debt instruments and hurricane clauses, as appropriate, for countries and regions vulnerable to disasters. We commit to exploring how existing official creditor cooperation mechanisms can address the potentially more complicated future insolvencies more effectively. We reaffirm the importance of debt restructurings being timely, orderly, effective, fair and negotiated in good faith. We reiterate that debtors and creditors must work together to prevent and resolve unsustainable debt situations. We reiterate our call to work towards a global consensus on guidelines for debtor and creditor responsibilities in borrowing by and lending to sovereigns, building on existing initiatives, and take note of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Principles on Promoting Responsible Sovereign Lending and Borrowing in this regard. We request the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development, as part of its 2019 report, to advance the analysis of state-contingent debt instruments, GDP-linked bonds, insurance coverage and other innovative mechanisms, as a means of reducing risks to sovereign balance sheets, particularly in small island developing States, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, middle-income countries and open economies that are more vulnerable to disasters.

Addressing systemic issues

25. We will continue to strengthen international coordination and policy coherence to enhance global financial and macroeconomic stability and will also work to prevent and reduce the risk and the impact of financial crises. We welcome progress in reforming international financial regulation and commit to implementing negotiated reforms while being watchful of unintended consequences and the need to balance the goals of access to credit with financial stability. We are mindful of new gaps that may result from financial innovations, including digital finance. We emphasize that correspondent banking is an important means of facilitating cross-border movement of funds and enables financial institutions to access financial services in different currencies and foreign jurisdictions, thereby supporting remittance flows. We note with concern the decline in correspondent banking in many regions which, if left

unchecked, may be detrimental to the promotion of financial inclusion, and welcome efforts by international organizations, including the Financial Stability Board and the Group of 20, as well as the private sector, to monitor and address the concerns related to the decline in correspondent banking relationships. We invite the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development to continue to monitor the decline in correspondent banking and its effects, as well as the possible unintended consequences of international financial regulation, as part of its 2019 report.

26. We note the ongoing fifteenth General Review of Quotas by IMF and look forward to the successful conclusion of the World Bank Group's shareholding reform. We will continue our work on further strengthening the global financial safety net, with a strong, quota-based and adequately resourced IMF at its centre. We support efforts to improve coordination between different elements of the global financial safety net. We recognize that the international system's overall financial response to disasters is insufficient and that better ex ante disaster risk reduction and resilience-building mechanisms and quick-disbursing ex post instruments are required. We take note of a growing number of successful regional sovereign risk insurance facilities, while underscoring that global risk management would offer more efficient risk diversification, sustainability and efficiency. We call on development cooperation providers to support countries that are not able to afford participation in these mechanisms. We invite the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development to examine existing frameworks and best practices with regard to approaches to risk management by development banks and related financial institutions and to report its findings in its 2019 report.

Science, technology, innovation and capacity-building

27. We reaffirm that the creation, development and diffusion of new innovations and technologies and associated know-how, including the transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms, are powerful drivers of economic growth and sustainable development. We remain committed to closing the digital divide in access and capacity within and between countries, including the gender gap. We recognize that new technologies are affecting the functioning of labour markets, with new types of employment in many cases replacing traditional patterns of work. We take note of the work of the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development in this regard and invite the Task Force to continue its work on this topic. We will support lifelong learning and skill acquisition for all, including entrepreneurial skills, adapt and strengthen employment, decent work and social protection policies and measures for all, as appropriate, and make efforts to address continued gender disparities and enhance inclusion of people in vulnerable situations, including for young people and persons with disabilities. We will promote the development and use of information and communications technology infrastructure, as well as capacity-building. We invite the Task Force to examine the implications of fintech and the weightless economy on financial inclusion and access to finance and financial regulation, in order to draw conclusions on how to adapt related policies.

28. We stress that capacity development is essential for achieving the 2030 Agenda and that capacity development must be country-driven, address the specific needs and conditions of countries and reflect national sustainable development strategies and priorities. We continue to support capacity-building for developing countries to strengthen their national science, technology and innovation capabilities. We welcome that ODA for scientific, technological and innovative capacity has increased significantly, but note with concern that it has not sufficiently benefited the poorest and most vulnerable countries. We welcome the progress made towards the establishment of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and the operationalization of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries in Turkey, and we

encourage all development partners to provide financial and technical assistance to ensure their full and effective implementation. We invite the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development to reflect and report on possible options to improve developing countries' access to appropriate technologies and innovative solutions.

29. We look forward to the third annual multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, to be held in New York on 5 and 6 June 2018, and its discussion on the Sustainable Development Goals that will be reviewed in depth at the 2018 high-level political forum on sustainable development, existing technologies, including local and indigenous knowledge, science, technology and innovation road maps and the impact of new and emerging technologies on sustainable development finance, which will be fed into the preparations of the 2018 high-level political forum and 2019 Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up.

Data, monitoring and follow-up

30. We recognize that large data gaps persist, particularly as concerns disaggregated data, and that significant efforts are required to strengthen national statistical systems. We encourage increased support of all types and from all sources, including capacity-building and technical support for developing countries, to strengthen their national statistical systems. We will strengthen our efforts to collect, analyse and disseminate data, disaggregated by sex, age, disability and other characteristics relevant in national contexts, including at the national, subnational and local levels, and gender statistics to improve policy design and implementation with regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. We invite the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development to examine the role big data can play in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

31. We note the establishment of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development in response to the Nairobi Maafikiano, which was adopted at the fourteenth session of UNCTAD.

32. We invite international, bilateral and other potential development cooperation partners to consider contributing generously to the trust fund to support activities for the follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development, in particular to support the travel to and participation of representatives from developing countries, in particular least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, in the annual Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up. We encourage Member States to continue to support the work of the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development, including through voluntary contributions, ensuring a broad, balanced and inclusive report.

33. We decide that the fourth Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up will convene from 15 to 18 April 2019, and will include the special high-level meeting of the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, WTO and UNCTAD. We also decide that the forum's modalities will be the modalities that applied to the 2018 forum. We further decide that in the outcome document of the 2019 forum, we will consider the need to hold a follow-up conference.

34. We request the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development to issue an advance unedited version of its 2019 report, no later than the end of February 2019, to be updated with the latest data upon its release, in order to facilitate the timely preparation of the draft conclusions and recommendations.